Design Sense

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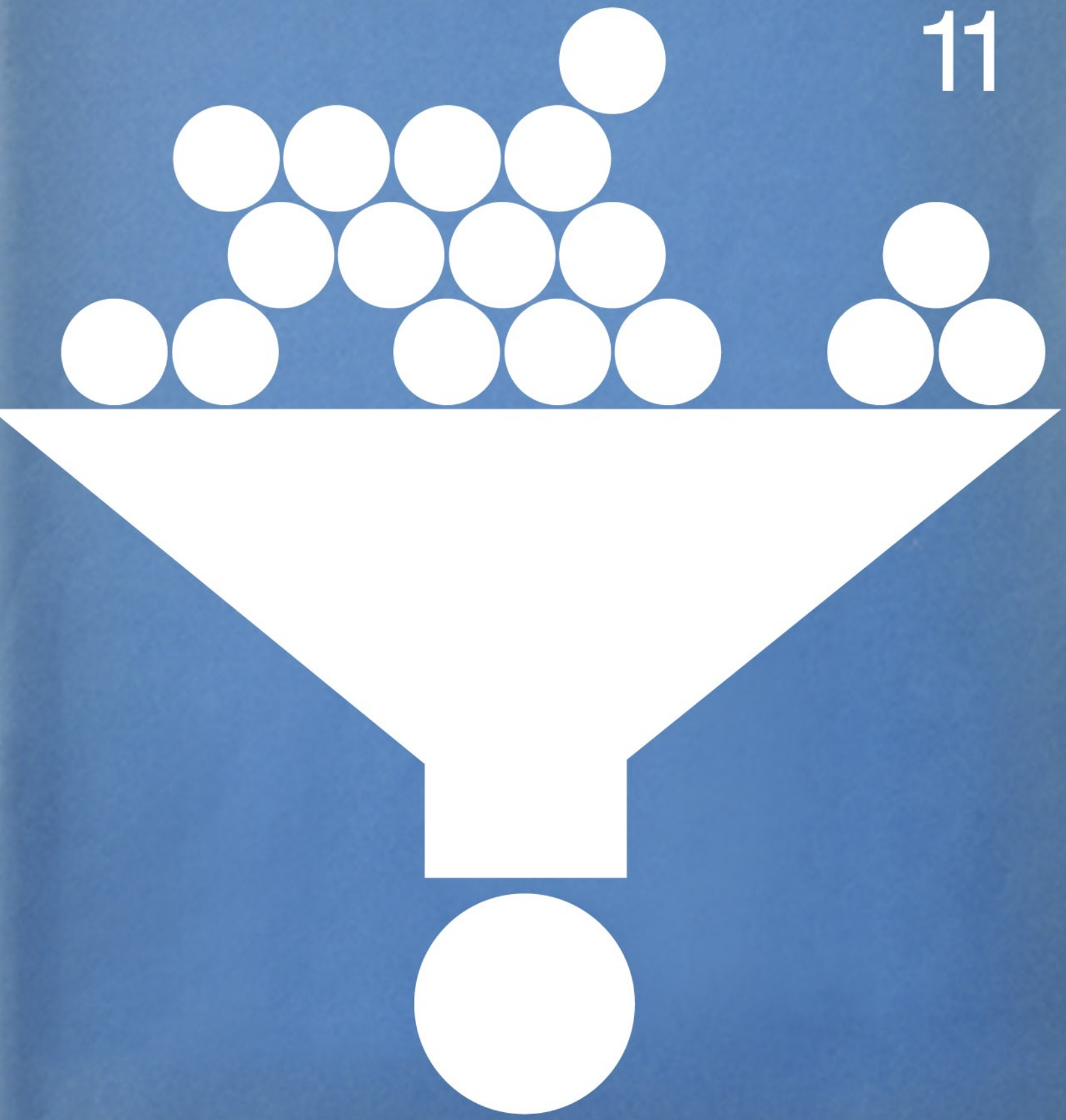

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DESIGN FOR SALES

For some years, we have talked about design as a tool for more effective selling.

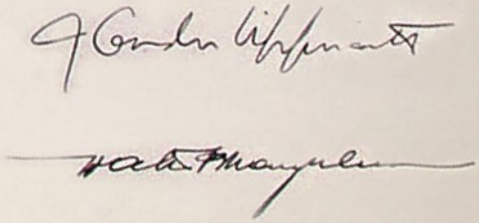
We have talked about it in terms of "marketing-oriented" package design ...stores designed with a "built-in personality"...products that "motivate customers" by design.

Some have raised their heads in limp horror at the "commercialism" of this approach — have suggested that we were selling "pure" design down the river for the sake of the client's almighty sales dollar. To this we can only say that we have never thought of our clients as art patrons, but as businessmen with a legitimate desire to get full return for every dollar invested...including those invested in design.

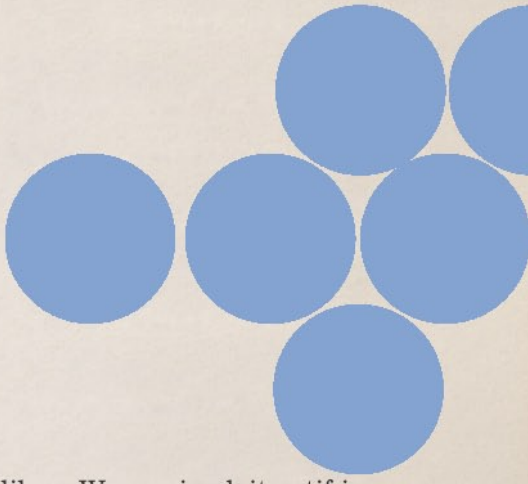
Others have said that our system of integrating design into the client's over-all marketing, advertising, merchandising, and publicity planning is nonsense — that in the final analysis all that most clients are really buying is the designer's pencil. To us, this is roughly as medieval as saying that all a client really busy from his advertising agency is a media selection service.

Still others have looked with fishy eye on the claims we have made for design's selling power. Answering this one has proved tougher. With frustrating frequency (and with good reason, from the client's point of view) we have had to maintain secrecy about some fine design success stories. Other times, it has been impossible to isolate and measure the effect of design, per se, simply because the sales picture had been distorted by the collateral effects of advertising and promotion efforts.

Recently, however, we came across some cases about which we can talk— and ones in which the role of design is clear. We thought you might like to know about them, and about the role of the industrial designer, as we see it, in building designs that sell.



THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER NEW FACTOR IN MODERN MARKETING



If there is one question that keeps recurring like a Wagnerian leitmotif in our talks with businessmen it is: "What do you industrial designer really do?"

Perhaps it is the word "industrial" which throws people off. Perhaps it is because the word "designer" is used in connection with everything from Paris fashions to penthouse interiors. Whatever the reason, the question is a legitimate one, deserving a clear-cut answer.

Twenty years ago — before World War II — the industrial designer, was indeed a "designer for industry." By and large, men like Teague, Dreyfuss, Loewy, Bel Geddes and other great names won their fame and fortune working in three dimensions molding new shapes for everything from appliances to zipper pulls. Working largely as individuals, relying mainly on their own personal intuition and creative genius, they shaped the future in streamlined curve and shining chrome.

The end of World War II and the changeover of the nation's production facilities brought new consumer goods in unparalleled quantity to satisfy what seemed to be an insatiable public demand. For a while, at least, anything sold — good design, bad design, indifferent design.

Then came the post war recessions, the satisfaction of pent-up consumer demand and the quick realization by marketing men that goods would not move by themselves, but would have to be sold — and that the appearance of a product or package could be a powerful spur to sales.

Back came the designer in a role which soon expanded to include package design, trademark design, design of stores and commercial interiors, design of signage — as well as his old specialty, product styling.

This expanded role soon brought the designer into contact with new kinds of people. Previously, he could talk to his alter ego, the production engineer, and be fairly sure of being understood. Now he had to communicate his ideas to advertising, marketing, sales, merchandising, public relations and research people. More important, he had to know his way around in all of these fields as well as his own. The old way of doing business began showing signs of strain.

Some have blamed the strain on personality differences when, in fact, the problem was largely one of communications. The world of the businessman-client and the world of the designer-artist were two very different worlds, indeed. They worked in different media...had different viewpoints...expressed themselves in different language. It was as hard for one to communicate to the other and be sure of comprehension as it was for wartime pilots to communicate the feeling of serial combat to people who had never been off the ground.

BREAKING THE COMMUNICATIONS BARRIER

The crying need for better two-way communications between designer and client led L&M to borrow a page from the advertising profession.

For years, advertising agencies have recognized the impossibility of forcing clients to deal separately with media men, copywriters, art directors, market researchers and merchandising people every time they wanted to get an idea across. Sensibly, the advertising agency structure allowed for account supervisors and account executives who acted as liaison between the client and the creative areas of the shop. L&M simply picked up, adapted and applied the account manager system to the creative world of design.

In short, L&M added to its staff men who could act as catalysts and communicators — men who were not designers but who knew the world and language of design as well as the world and language of business, and who could provide and effective bridge between the two.

Some have suggested that this third man is no more necessary than feathers on airplanes. The designer, they say, is (or should be) sophisticated enough to communicate his ideas directly to the client, and the client is (or should be) sophisticated enough to know what he is talking about.

THE SUPERMAN SHORTAGE

Admittedly, men exist who combine a superior design talent with an equally superior knowledge of advertising, merchandising, research and other non-design subjects. From a practical point of view, however, people with the necessary ambivalence of talent were all but impossible to find. Most of the time people who were first-rate marketing men turned out to be something less than great as designers — or, conversely, people who were first-rate designers were neophytes in the world of business and marketing. The ideal solution was to keep the design talent undiluted by separating the two areas, as has been done in L&M's account manager structure.

From the account manager concept to the concept of the design "team" was a short step — and a natural one. The modern industrial designer realizes that the demands of modern marketing are many and varied, and that no two clients are exactly alike in either product or problems. He is aware that no single individual, however great his personal genius, can keep track of all the fast-moving changes in supermarket, drug, department store and discount house selling...can keep informed on every new trend in advertising, distribution and merchandising...can know all the developments in packaging materials or product production.

In short, he recognizes that he doesn't know all the answers. And he is aware he cannot hope to learn everything he must know during the crucial initial stages of a new design assignment.

But he knows where to find the information he must have.

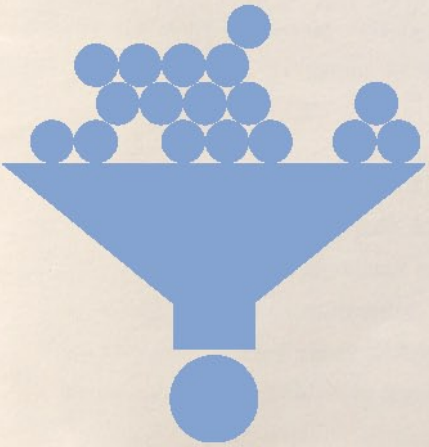
FOR MANY PROBLEMS: MANY EXPERTS

The client's advertising agency, for instance, clearly knows what advertising themes and images have been most productive. The client's own production, sales and marketing executives obviously know everything there is to know about how the product is made, distributed and sold. Suppliers have the latest word on new packaging or product materials. Research can provide vital information on consumer reactions to present and proposed designs — can indicate quickly and surely the most profitable design directions.

At L&M all these people are brought into the picture. Design becomes a team operation in which production, advertising, marketing, merchandising, sales, publicity and promotion people from the client's side of the fence work closely with package and product marketing men, design researchers and creative design personnel on the designer's staff.

The end product is "marketing-oriented" design — design which works with maximum effectiveness in the client's production lines, in his advertising, at the point of sale and in the customer's home.

Today's industrial designer, like the pilot of a modern jet airplane, cannot be a solo performer. The days of flying by the seat of the pants — of design by hunch and by guesswork are over. Even the best-heeled corporation cannot afford the high cost of today's design mistakes.



This does not mean less inspired design; in fact, it puts a premium on getting the best design talent money can buy. Today's designer must be as creative as ever, but today he must rely — as the pilot of a jet fighter must rely — on information and guidance fed to him continuously by dozens of other people and scores of sensitive instruments. Like the pilot, the designer is still essential to the success of the mission. But today his success depends on, and is a victory for, the entire team.

And today his success is measured, not by whether his creations are displayed in museums, but by whether they expand markets, move products or motivate customers as the examples on the following pages have done.

CASE NO. 1 DESIGN TO OPEN CLOSED DOORS

Sometimes a new package can increase distribution even before it hits the market. Take the case of Brioschi (pronounced Bree-os-kee), a 78-year-old anti-acid compound of Italian origin which had been a steady seller in the U.S. "Mom and Pop" stores for more than half a century.

James Ceribelli, President of Ceribelli & Co., distributors for the product, wanted to know in advance whether his new L&M-designed package would help his efforts to crack the mass "anti-acid" market in America. Would it open doors of supermarket, drug and variety store buyers who had remained cool to his product in its previous package? Carrying a mock-up of the proposed new design, he visited retailers, asked their opinions of the product in its new package. Did they think it would sell? More important, would they stock it?

The answer in Mr. Ceribelli's words: "The new package proved to be a powerful sales argument. We are now assured of distribution in practically every supermarket in the New York metropolitan area, greater support from druggists and far greater in-store sales."

While the package change was the clincher in Mr. Ceribelli's argument, it was by no means the only story he had to sell. Accompanying the package change was a major revamping of the company's marketing strategy — including a thorough overhaul of the product's retail and wholesale price structure, and the development and testing by the firm's advertising agency, Ellington and Company, of new, hard-hitting advertising themes.

Aware of Brioschi's changed marketing strategy, L&M's designers decided that the package change would have to be just as complete. And complete it was.
The previous package consisted of a bottle of stock design with a label reflecting the product's old-world origin — including an illustration of a buxom lass serving Brioschi to two affluent be-mustached gentlemen, resplendent in high silk hats and waistcoats.

The re-design replaces this quaint look with a clean, ethical-looking label. To give the product the strong and distinctive shelf impact needed in mass display, the new label spells out the name in bright red letters against a white background — both standing out bold against the blue glass of the bottle itself. Even the label copy has a new sales punch: "Brioschi — for stomach upsets."

Total re-design included the bottle shape. One of the problems with the old shape was the tendency of the crystals to settle during shipment. This left a gap at the top of the bottle, creating the incorrect impression of short measure. The new, high-shoulder container minimizes this problem.

Designers also kept one eye on production costs. As a result savings were effected in the cost of bottle and label substantial enough to contribute toward a new pricing structure which increased a jobber's discounts and placed the product in a better competitive position price-wise.

Final judgment on the design change came from Mr. Ceribelli himself. "Small manufacturers," he said, "should realize that package re-design can bring greater returns than can be imagined when weighed against the expenditures involved. With this new package as an integral part of our new marketing strategy, I am convinced we will be able to double our sales."

Brioschi
for stomach upsets

Tareyton
FILTERS

CASE NO. 2 NEW IMAGES, NEW SALES

In the competitive tobacco industry sales figures are as closely guarded as atomic secrets. All we know about the success of American Tobacco's new Dual-Tip Tareyton is that it's sales have been more than double the most optimistic projections of American's tobacco men.

Behind the sales success of this bold, twin-striped package is a design program that joined researchers, designers and marketing experts into a single, smooth-functioning team.

The team started with just one preconceived notion — that for cigarettes the package is the nucleus around which the brand image must be built. This is true for many reasons, but mostly because the cigarette package is an intensely personal item. The smoker carries it, displays it, handles it over and over again during the course of a day. It becomes, as no other package can become, a statement of the user's taste and a reflection of his personality.

For this reason, L&M's designers concentrated on the in-hand and in-use aspects of Tareyton's new design. Their efforts were directed not toward shelf display, but toward creating a package that both users and non-users could identify immediately — and one that imparted the image of good taste and high quality long associated with this brand name and the parent company.

Ten months and more than one hundred designs later, the candidate packages had been narrowed down to four. These were subjected to extensive depth motivational testing by Package Research Institute, L&M's design affiliate before final selection was made.

The final package, like the old, is stately and dignified. At the same time its lively read and white design, its clean "modern" look give it an appeal to a broader market which includes younger as well as older groups.

Each element of the new package has a specific job to do. The white background suggests the purity associated with the new dual filter tip. The two stripes — abstract and modern — recall the stripes of the previous package. Combined in this new form, however, they not only make a compelling brandmark, but serve the added function of reminding the viewer of the duality of the product's filter tip. The italicized logotype is readable and tastefully executed. Design here carries the message: no need for a loud brand name. The extra-thin gold tear strip, the delicate double tobacco leaf symbol, the formalized gold crown are other details which add to the impression of elegance and quality.

These design elements are the result of creative design operating in teamwork with thoughtful research and analysis which established, first, the characteristics of cigarette imagery in general; second, the image evoked by the old Tareyton package; third, the "optimum" image for Tareyton — the image which had to be captured in the re-design program.

At every step of the way, the marketing aspects of the package were kept in mind, with special emphasis on the package's use in advertising and promotion. The final design comes across equally well in black and white or full color...on television or in newspapers...in slick magazines or on billboard-size posters.

The result is a package that mirrors the image of its product and serves the needs of the marketing men responsible for its sales success.

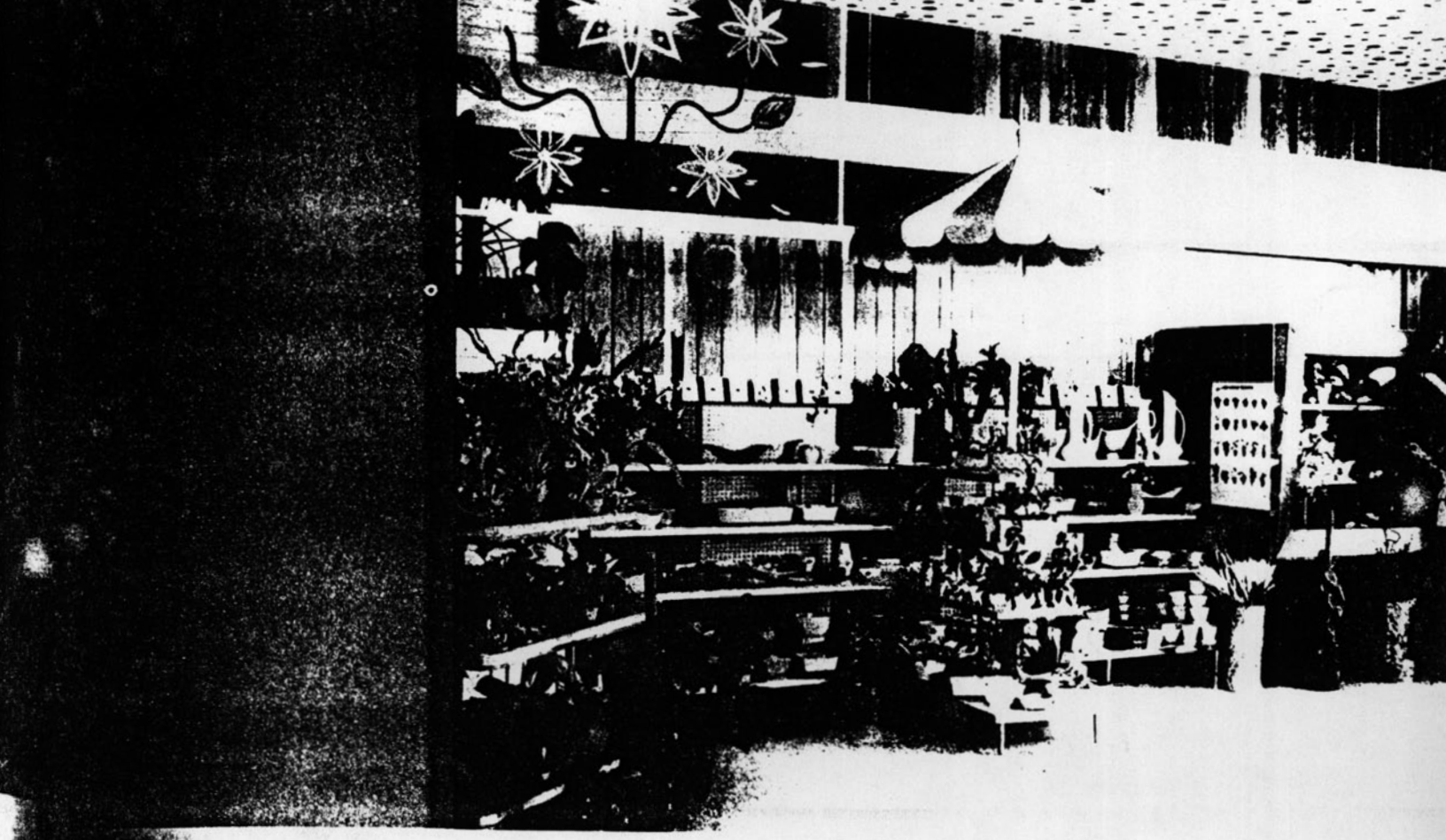
CASE NO. 3
NEW DESIGN PERKS UP COFFEEMAKER SALES

When the Mardigian Corporation of Detroit asked L&M to re-design the Duralux automatic percolator made by its subsidiary, Buckeye Aluminum Company, they set two conditions. First, re-design must capture the look of quality. Second, if possible, the unit should be easier to make, less costly to sell.

The final design achieves the first goal from top to bottom with simplicity and cleanness of line that conveys visually the quality of the product. Even the unit's controls have been simplified to a single white rotating dial, plus a red jeweled pilot light to signal when the coffee is ready for serving.

It achieves the second—production economy—by design that significantly reduced the number of manufacturing rejects. Recognizing that most of the difficulties occurred during the "swaging" operation (the tapering down of the aluminum body from base to top), the designers left the top opening a full 3-9/16" wide, thus automatically reducing the amount of swaging necessary. The wide opening had another advantage: it made for easier cleaning, added another selling point to the product.

Proof of the design was in the selling. And here the new Duralux percolator has been an outstanding performer. According to Mr. Edward Mardigian, President of the parent company, "Consumer response to our new model has exceeded our expectations. In spite of the fact that it has been on the market only a few months—and in spite of the fact that this has not been an easy year for luxury appliances—sales of our new model are running well ahead of last year."



CASE NO. 4 DESIGN TO BUILD CUSTOMER LOYALTY

By tradition, supermarket customers are supposed to be a fickle group, shopping at whatever store happens to be handiest, or newest, or has this week's special on leg of lamb.

The new Piggly-Wiggly supermarket in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, successfully whips this chronic problem with a combination of quality products and an interior design by L&M that draws customers in, then keeps them coming back.

Here is the way Mr. William Grasser, Executive Vice President of the chain puts it. "A few weeks ago, a new shopping strip opened just a few blocks away. This looked like pretty rough competition, and we were prepared for a dip in customer traffic. To our surprise, volume stayed as steady as a rock."

Obviously, design cannot claim all the credit. The quality of the merchandise had to be there first. What design did was to make this quality image visible.

The image has been achieved in many, carefully thought-out ways. The produce section uses bright, leafy greens accented with sharp blues to suggest the crispness of just picked vegetables. The meat section (a Piggly-Wiggly specialty) is backed up with a solid wall of maple flooring, recalling the traditional butcher's block and the atmosphere of a specialty meat shop. The flower shop gives the impression of an outdoor patio flanked by a colorful garden.

Colors and signage, lighting and textures vary from section to section, help prevent shopper boredom. The over-all effect is one of elegance—but an elegance that is clearly within reach of the average housewife's purse.

GOOD TASTE: WHAT IS IT? WHO'S GOT IT

To be most effective, design of packages, products or commercial interiors should express, visually, the taste (or the taste aspirations) of the customer.

But what is consumer taste? How is it formed? It is a changing thing, obviously (yesterday's good taste is today's monstrosity), but in what direction is it moving? More important for marketing men, what are the taste preferences of their customers?

In an effort to nail down something as elusive, as vital to design-for-selling as "taste", Package Research Institute, L&M's design research affiliate has just completed an eight-month study of consumer tastes.

Preliminary findings show two significant facts:

First, taste is clearly related to social class. There is a significant difference between the taste preferences of people in the upper-middle class group (professional, managerial and executives) and the preferences of people in the lower-middle class group (sales and clerical workers). There is also a difference—though less pronounced—between the taste of the lower-middle classes and people from the upper-lower class group (skilled and semi-skilled workers).

Second, taste is reflected to the personality of the individual as well as his social status. By and large, people who are "Impulse Control" types—that is able to restrain their desire for immediate gratification—had significantly "better" taste than people who were "Impulse Release" types, i.e., people who seek immediate rewards.

A third related finding: far from being disparate, personality and social class are closely related. Impulse control, by and large, is more prevalent among the upper-middle class groups; impulse release is a characteristic of people in the upper-lower class groups.

Taste preferences were measured by using fifteen different design exhibits ranging from packages, to air conditioners, to table lamps, to neckties. Each exhibit consisted of a pair of items—one representing "good" taste (impulse control) and the other representing "bad" taste (impulse release). The items were selected by a panel of designers and a panel of psychologists working independently. Designers rated the items on the basis of aesthetic content; the psychologist panel rated them on the basis of impulsivity.

Respondents were shown the full series of fifteen paired items and asked to choose the one in each pair they preferred. To measure personality, a modified TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) was administered. Questions relating to social status and social mobility were also asked.

Complete findings of the study will be published early in January. Copies will be made available to DESIGN SENSE readers upon request.

Dummy cookie package was one of the 15 pairs of items used in the PRI survey. The "Good" Taste design was preferred by 72% of the upper-middle class group of respondents, but by only 34% of the respondents in the lower-middle class group. It was the first choice of only 32% of the working class group.

...MONTH...

...stores, the Lavoris Company ...packaging program. ...product registration which ties in directly with the Lavoris consumer advertising program.

...back panels picture a full-size bottle of Lavoris on a yellow background. The side panels, also in four colors, provide a highly ethical presentation of product uses and consumer benefits. The new Lavoris trademark appears on all panels to improve self-service product identification.

"Based on our tests," said Harold Keen, President of the Lavoris Company, "we believe the new package, which showed an *average increase of 17%* (ranging from 4% to 38%) in over 2,000 stores with *no advertising, no special promotions or other features*, will push Lavoris sales still higher."

Trade announcement from
Savage-Lewis, Inc.
Communications
Minneapolis, Minnesota

BEG PARDON DEPARTMENT

In a recent issue of DESIGN SENSE we said that auto mufflers were not all they might be in terms of "giving better service throughout a longer life." Since then, the AP Parts Corp. of Toledo has let us know in a friendly way that they have been using thicker steels in their mufflers, have added a zinc coating to the shells and greatly improved the internal design, with the result that their mufflers now have a long life-expectancy on modern cars. To AP Parts, our congratulations for a consumer-oriented approach, and our thanks for bringing their work in this up-to-now troublesome field to our attention.

The last issue of DESIGN SENSE (Uni-Marketing) used three ads to show the extremes to which advertisers have gone in featuring the package in their advertising. Tatham-Laird, Inc. of Chicago has chided us for picking a "Sucaryl" advertisement as the example of minimum emphasis on the package, pointing out, rightly, that sometimes it makes sense to play the package up big, sometimes it doesn't. With this we are in complete agreement. The point we were trying to make (and missed) was that the package is a sales tool whose power is all too frequently overlooked in advertising. The examples illustrated were not intended to represent either "good" or "bad"—but were picked solely to show the wide range possible in advertising treatment.